

Terry Nelson Testimony

House Bill 542

House Local Government Committee

February 17, 2011

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee,

I have been involved as a surveyor and consultant on subdivisions in Ravalli County for approximately 20 years. HB 542 helps to clarify issues that have come up in several subdivisions over the years. Specifically, Page 4 Lines 17-18 helps to clarify the Impact on Agriculture. I have seen arguments as to the potential productivity of agriculture on subdivisions which have never had ag operations on them. This change helps.

Also, Page 5, Lines 16-21 helps assure that governmental agencies are objective in their comments and reviews of the subdivision. I have seen FWP officials, after submitting written comments that we have complied with, show up at the commissioners meeting and help get a subdivision denied based on new, subjective and unsupported information. As a governmental official, the testimony carries more weight and therefore should be held to a higher standard of proof.

Finally, Page 5, Lines 22-23 deals with impacts on future subdivisions. This has always been presented in testimony on subdivision but takes a crystal ball to predict the future. I remember one subdivision that was asked to present possible future subdivision designs before being able to proceed with their proposed subdivision. When the local sanitarian was not happy with the approved location of the septic systems, the developer agreed to move the septic systems to a different approved spot that had been designated as possible future lots. The county denied the pending subdivision on the basis of the drainfields affecting the proposed future lots.

Please support this bill.

Thank you.



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